

about the other party, the Grand Old Party, and say: They just can't help themselves. When it comes to tax cuts, they just can't stay away from giving tax cuts to the wealthiest people in America at the expense of working families, at the expense of Medicare, at the expense of paying down the national debt, and at the expense of our current economic prosperity.

The Republican Party is adrift, searching for an issue. The one they think they can coalesce behind is a tax cut, the one thing that brings every wing of their party, from extreme right to right and everything between it, together. Yet every time they do it, it turns out they have tipped the scales so heavily to the rich that the American people say we do not want any part of this. If this is just going to be a cheering section of people from country clubs who think the tax cuts are really going to be something for the future, so be it, but it is not good enough for the country.

Mrs. BOXER. Will the Senator yield for a very quick question?

Mr. DURBIN. Yes.

Mrs. BOXER. I have to again say thank you to the Senator. I was looking at some of the analysis of the Republican tax cut, the across-the-board one. It said, if you earn about \$300,000 a year, you would get a \$20,000-a-year tax cut. I wonder if the Senator has thought about this. The tax cut, therefore, for those folks who earn over \$300,000, would be almost twice as much money as a person working on the minimum wage earns, which is approximately \$11,000, \$12,000. Could my friend just talk about the unfairness of that situation?

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I think it is fundamentally unfair. I agree with the Senator from California. Most people who are in these high-net-worth situations would not miss a decimal point in their net worth, but the Republican tax cut plan wants to give them more money. Yet when we try to bring up an issue such as increasing the minimum wage from \$5.15 an hour, the Republicans just will not accept that. So we are going to have that fight later this year, I am sure, on the floor of the Senate.

That gives me an opportunity to summarize, if I may, my view of this Congress and the difference between the two parties. Take a look at the Senate over the last 2 months if you want to know the difference between this side of the aisle, the Democratic side, and the Republican side.

On the issue of gun control, sensible gun control, after the shootings in schools across America, the Democrats pushed a sensible gun control plan which attracted the support of six Republican Senators. I salute their courage for joining us, giving us finally enough votes, as a minority, to bring in Vice President GORE casting the tie-breaking vote for sensible gun control—trigger locks for guns that are safer for kids, trying to make sure peo-

ple buying guns at gun shows are not criminals or children, trying to make sure we do not keep importing these high-capacity ammunition clips of 240 rounds of ammunition. Who needs that for hunting or safety in their homes?

We passed it, sent it over to the Republicans in the House, and they just beat it to pieces. There is nothing left. We have to get back and pass sensible gun control—a clear difference between Democrats and Republicans.

On the Patients' Bill of Rights, we on the Democratic side came in and said what is going on is scandalous; doctors should make decisions, not insurance companies; and insurance companies should be held accountable when they make the wrong decision. The Democrats stood for that position. The Republicans, with the exception of two Senators, opposed us. The difference between the Democrats and Republicans: We believe in the Patients' Bill of Rights, the Republicans oppose it.

When it comes to this issue, what a change of hats. The Democrats are in the role of fiscal conservatives. The Democrats are saying mind our own business when it comes to Social Security, the future of Medicare, and retiring the national debt; the Republican side says at least \$1 trillion in tax cuts the first 10 years, and then watch it explode in the outyears.

For the American people following this debate in the Senate, they have a choice. If you buy into the Republican philosophy of runaway tax cuts and irresponsible spending in the future, if you buy into the idea of standing up on the floor of the Senate for the health insurance companies and opposing the efforts of families and doctors and hospitals to bring some sanity back to health care, if you buy into the Republican position supporting the National Rifle Association and the gun lobby, then that is your party, that is where you should turn, and be proud of it.

But if you think there is a better choice, if you think coming together on a bipartisan basis for sensible gun control, for the Patients' Bill of Rights, and for a fiscally responsible approach to our budget in the future, I think that is the better way to go. That is the clear choice, and politics is about choices.

I thank my colleagues from California and Maryland for joining me in the morning business, and I yield the remainder of my time.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is now closed.

INTELLIGENCE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2000

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will now resume consideration of H.R. 1555, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 1555) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2000 for intelligence and intelligence-related activities of the United States Government, the Community Management Account, and the Central Intelligence Agency Retirement and Disability System, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Kyl amendment No. 1258, to restructure Department of Energy nuclear security functions, including the establishment of the Agency for Nuclear Stewardship.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Under the previous order, the Senator from New Mexico, Mr. BINGAMAN, is recognized to offer an amendment.

AMENDMENT NO. 1260 TO AMENDMENT NO. 1258
(Purpose: Relating to the field reporting relationships under the Agency for Nuclear Stewardship)

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, I send a second-degree amendment to the desk and ask for its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from New Mexico [Mr. BINGAMAN], for himself, Mr. DOMENICI, and Mr. REID, proposes an amendment numbered 1260 to amendment No. 1258.

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendment is as follows:

In section 213 of the Department of Energy Organization Act, as proposed by subsection (c) of the amendment, at the end of subsection (k), insert the following:

"Such supervision and direction of any Director or contract employee of a national security laboratory or of a nuclear weapons production facility shall not interfere with communication to the Department, the President, or Congress, of technical findings or technical assessments derived from, and in accord with, duly authorized activities. The Under Secretary for Nuclear Stewardship shall have responsibility and authority for, and may use, as appropriate field structure for the programs and activities of the Agency."

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, I offer this amendment on behalf of myself and my cosponsors, Senator DOMENICI and Senator REID.

The amendment does two things. The first sentence of the amendment says:

Such supervision and direction of any Director or contract employee of a national security laboratory or of a nuclear weapons production facility shall not interfere with communication to the Department, the President, or Congress, of technical findings or technical assessments derived from, and in accord with, duly authorized activities.